

# WALLACE BERMAN

*PHOTOGRAPHY AND OTHER WORKS OF ART*  
1950 - 1976

FRONT: WALLACE BERMAN, *TOSH BERMAN*, 1960 PRINTED 2006, SILVER GELATIN PRINT, 20 X 16 INCHES

OPENING RECEPTION FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2007 6 TO 8 P.M.  
EXHIBITION CONTINUES TO JANUARY 19, 2008

**MICHAEL KOHN GALLERY**

8071 BEVERLY BLVD. LOS ANGELES, CA 90048

WWW.KOHNGALLERY.COM 323 658 8088 INFO@KOHNGALLERY.COM



# Wallace Berman

March 4-27, 1982

LIBRARY

MAR 19 1982

LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
MUSEUM OF ART

## Wallace Berman

1926  
Born Staten Island, New York  
1944  
Attended Chouinard Art School and Jepson Art School  
1965  
William & Noma Copley Foundation Award  
1966  
National Council of Arts and Humanities Grant  
1976  
Died, Los Angeles

## Selected Exhibitions

1957  
*Wallace Berman*, Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles  
1965  
*Studio Exhibition*, Beverly Glen, Los Angeles  
1966  
*Los Angeles Now*, Robert Fraser Gallery, London  
1967  
Topanga Community House, Topanga, California  
1968  
*Wallace Berman*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
*Wallace Berman: Verifax Collages*, Jewish Museum, New York  
*Assemblage in California*, University of California, Irvine  
1969-70  
*West Coast 1945-1969*, Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena, California, November 24, 1969 to January 18, 1970. Exhibition traveled to City Art Museum of St. Louis, Art Gallery of Ontario, and Fort Worth Art Center  
1973  
The Mermaid Tavern, Topanga  
1974-75  
*Poets of the Cities, New York and San Francisco, 1950-1965*. Exhibition traveled to Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, San Francisco Museum of Art, and Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut.  
*Radio/Aether Series*, Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles

1975  
*Collage and Assemblage*, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art  
*Environment and the New Art 1960-1975*, University of California, Davis  
*Art as a Muscular Principle*, Mount Holyoke College, South Adley, Massachusetts  
1976  
*The Last Time I Saw Ferus*, Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California  
1977  
*California Painting and Sculpture: The Modern Era*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Exhibition traveled to Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.  
*Wallace Berman Exhibition*, Timothea Stewart Gallery, Los Angeles  
1978  
*Wallace Berman*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York  
1979-80  
*Electroworks*, International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, New York, New York  
1981  
*California: A Sense of Individualism*, L.A. Louver Gallery, Venice, California  
*Art in Los Angeles: 17 Artists in the Sixties*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
*Southern California Artists: 1940-1980*, Laguna Beach Museum of Art, Laguna, California



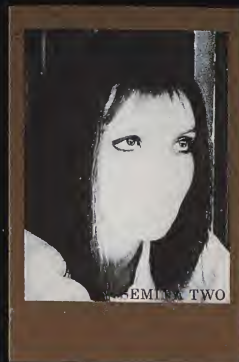
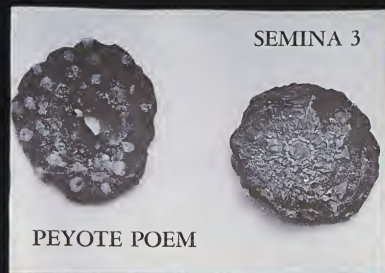
*Untitled, 1965*  
Verifax collage, 24 x 19 inches





L.A. LOUVER  
is pleased to announce

# SEMINA



A newly produced facsimile edition of  
Wallace Berman's collection of nine journals  
devoted to the poetry and art of his time.  
Semina was originally published in 1957 through 1964.

Edition of 320, produced by George Herms.

Published by L.A. Louver

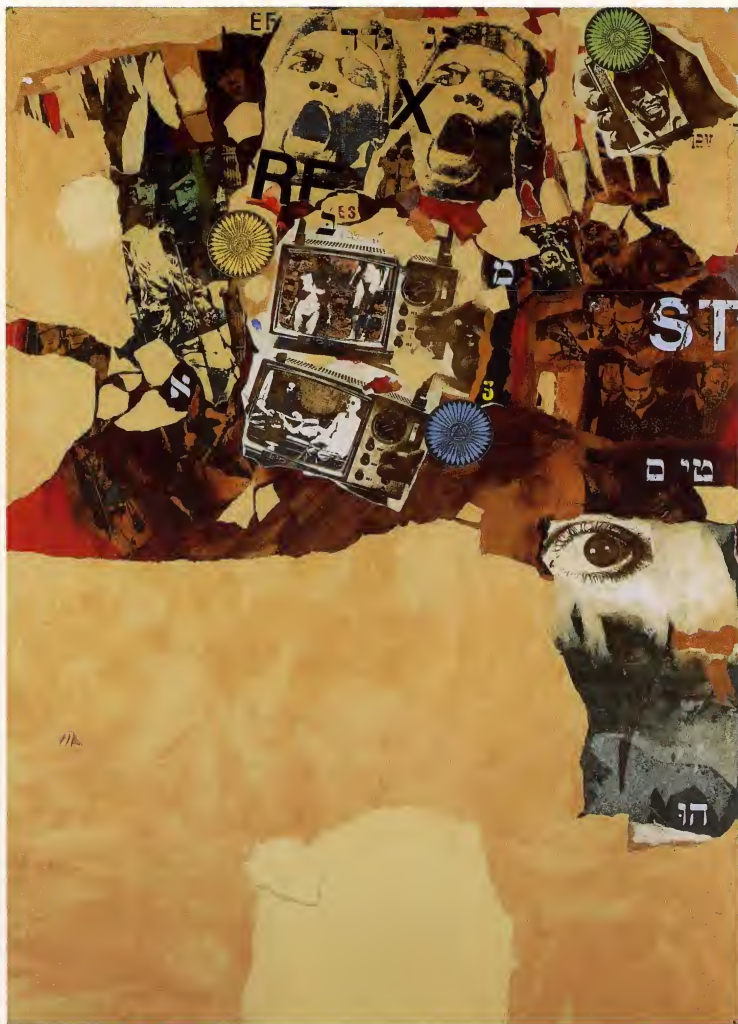
BERMAN,  
WALLACE

# POEM MAKERS

L.A. LOUVER



# WALLACE BERMAN



*Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* 1964 mixed media 43 x 30¾ inches

# JESS



*Reentry Pattern (or Telepathic Conspiracy Between Tiamat and Fenris)*, 1985  
color paste-up 43¼ x 23 inches, collection Dr. and Mrs. Gerald Bush



# GEORGE HERMS



*Pandora's Box*, 1992 mixed media assemblage 56 x 50 x 11 inches



# POEM MAKERS

**June 5—July 3, 1992**

You are cordially invited  
to attend a reception

**Thursday, June 4, 7–9 pm**

55 North Venice Boulevard  
77 Market Street

Valet parking

With special thanks to the Archives of  
American Art, Smithsonian Institution  
and to Jess for their generous loan  
of documents to this exhibition.

**L.A. LOUVER**

55 North Venice Boulevard, Venice, California 90291, Tuesday–Saturday, 11–5 pm, and  
77 Market Street, Venice, California 90291, Tuesday–Saturday, 12–5 pm and by appointment  
Validated parking available 310/822-4955 Fax 310/821-7529

Please join us for a  
Special Preview Reception for members and friends of the  
Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

POEM MAKERS: WORKS BY  
WALLACE BERMAN, GEORGE HERMS AND JESS  
featuring documents lent by the Archives of American Art

Wednesday, May 27, 1992  
6:30–8:30 pm

R.S.V.P. to Barbara Wilson at (818) 405-7847

## L.A. LOUVER

55 North Venice Boulevard, Venice, California 90291, Tuesday–Saturday, 11–5 pm, and  
77 Market Street, Venice, California 90291, Tuesday–Saturday, 12–5 pm and by appointment  
Validated parking available 310/822-4955 Fax 310/821-7529

The Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, collects and preserves original papers, photographs and taped interviews that document the history of the visual arts in America from colonial times to the present. It contains not only the papers of painters, sculptors, craft artists, collectors and dealers, but also those of historians, curators, critics, museums, societies and institutions. Founded in 1954 and combined with the Smithsonian Institution in 1970, the Archives is the world's largest collection of manuscript materials pertinent to the art and cultural history of the United States.

Financial support is provided by the Smithsonian Institution, which supplies approximately half the operating costs, and by contributions from private individuals, foundations, trusts and corporations.



# Beyond Baroque and L.A. LOUVER

announce an evening's presentation

of

POEM MAKER

WALLACE BERMAN'S "SEMINA"

Readings by

MICHAEL McCLURE

DAVID MELTZER

Films by

LARRY JORDAN

*Visions of a City* 1957 with Michael McClure

*Triptych in Four Parts* 1958

with Phillip Lamantia, Wallace Berman and Michael McClure

STAN BRAKHAGE

*In Between* 1955 with Jess and Robert Duncan

WALLACE BERMAN

*Untitled* 1950's/1960's

Friday, June 26, 1992

8:30 pm

Admission \$6.00 general

\$3.00 for members of Beyond Baroque, students & seniors

# Beyond Baroque

LITERARY / ARTS CENTER

681 Venice Boulevard, Venice, California 90291  
Tel. 310.822 3006 Fax 310.827.7432

In conjunction with the exhibition  
**Wallace Berman Retrospective**  
September 21 - November 11

LIBRARY  
SEP 28 1979  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
MUSEUM OF ART

# In Celebration of Wallace Berman

Saturday and Sunday,  
September 22 & 23, 1979

University Art Museum, Berkeley  
2626 Bancroft Way

**Saturday September 22**  
1:00-2:00 pm  
Museum Theater

2:00 pm  
Gallery B

3:00 pm  
Gallery A

**Films:** Wallace Berman, Dean Stockwell, Larry Jordan, Paul Beattie

**Poetry:** George Herms, Jack Hirshman, Michael McClure, David Meltzer

**Jazz:** The Subterraneans

**Sunday September 23**

1:00 pm  
Gallery B

2:00 pm  
Gallery B

3:00 pm  
Gallery A

**Gallery Question-and-answer session:** Hal Glicksman,  
Exhibition Organizer and Director, Otis Art Institute Gallery

**Jazz:** The Subterraneans

**Poetry:** Diane Di Prima, Robert Duncan, George Herms



BERMAN, WALLACE



*Silent*, 1967-69

# Wallace Berman

Whitney Museum of American Art  
945 Madison Avenue, New York

January 18-March 5, 1978

LIBRARY

MAY 25 1978

LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
MUSEUM OF ART



## Wallace Berman

Born in Los Angeles, California, 1926

Died near Topanga Canyon, California, 1976

### Checklist of the Exhibition

#### *Untitled*, 1947

Pencil on paper, 10½ x 8¼ inches

Collection of Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California

#### *Untitled*, 1947

Pencil on paper, 10½ x 8¼ inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

#### *Homage to Herman Hesse*, 1954

Wood sculpture, 19¾ x 21 x 17¾ inches

Collection of Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California

#### *The Panel*, 1955-56

Stained and distressed wood, artist's photograph of Shirley Berman, fragment of letter and mirror; approximately 60 inches high

Work destroyed. Photograph by Charles Brittin

#### *Lenny Bruce*, 1956

Collage with butterfly wings, 12½ x 5¾ inches

Collection of Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California

#### *Temple*, 1957

Wood, mannequin, skeleton key, photographs, wood and metal box, *Semina No. 1* envelope and contents; approximately 84 inches high

Work destroyed. Photograph by Charles Brittin

#### *Jay de Feo*, 1959

Photograph with hand cross-hatching, 5 x 4 inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

#### *Jay de Feo*, 1959

Photograph with hand cross-hatching, 5 x 4 inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

#### *Jay de Feo*, 1959

Photograph with hand cross-hatching, 5 x 4½ inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

#### *Trophi*, 1964

Verifax with acrylic, 7¼ x 6¼ inches

Collection of Russel Tamblyn, Topanga, California

#### *Silent*, 1967

Verifax, 49¼ x 46¾ inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

#### *Silent*, 1967-69 (Illustrated)

Verifax, 49¼ x 46¾ inches

Timothea Stewart Gallery, Los Angeles

#### *Silent*, 1968-69

Verifax, 13 x 14 inches

Timothea Stewart Gallery, Los Angeles

#### *Silent*, 1968-69

Verifax, 13 x 14 inches

Timothea Stewart Gallery, Los Angeles

#### *Silent*, 1968-69

Verifax, 24¾ x 26¾ inches

Timothea Stewart Gallery, Los Angeles

#### *Silent*, 1968-69

Verifax, 24¾ x 26¾ inches

Timothea Stewart Gallery, Los Angeles

#### *Shuffle*, 1969

Verifax collage with acrylic on paper, 13 x 14 inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

#### *Shuffle*, 1969

Verifax collage with acrylic on paper, 13 x 14 inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

#### *Shuffle*, 1969

Verifax collage with acrylic on paper, 13 x 14 inches

Timothea Stewart Gallery, Los Angeles

#### *For Joan*, 1972

Verifax with lettraset, 11½ x 8½ inches

Collection of Joan Simon, Malibu, California

#### *400-300-50*, 1974

Rock with acrylic and black chain, 8¼ x 7½ x 7½ inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

#### *Untitled (Music Sheet)*, 1974

Lettraset and acrylic on paper, 12 x 9 inches

Collection of Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California

#### *Silent*, 1975

Verifax, 30½ x 33½ inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

#### *Silent*, 1975

Verifax, 30½ x 33½ inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

#### *Sound*, 1975

Verifax, 30½ x 33½ inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

#### *Sound*, 1975

Verifax, 30½ x 33½ inches

Collection of Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California

# Wallace Berman

LIBRARY

MAR 17 1976 926-76

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Wallace Berman died in an auto accident Feb. 17, one day short of his 50th birthday. He had been a spiritual shadow across the art world for two decades. He believed that being an artist was a calling that transcended worldly recognition and reward. He lived in Topanga Canyon with his wife Shirley and son Tosh. When he appeared—rarely—at a gallery opening he stood diffidently in corners, small, hawk-profiled, shoulder-length straight hair. His intense appearance frightened some people, but he was gentle.

His first public exhibition at the Ferus Gallery in 1957 was closed by the Hollywood vice squad. It included a collage with a drawing by another artist the police regarded as pornographic. Berman retired from public exhibition. He produced an underground publication using a hand press, called Semina. He was an early publisher of such poets as William Burroughs, Dave Melzer, Michael McClure and Stuart Perkoff. Later he illustrated covers for their books. He influenced the collage art of a group of former Hollywood child stars: Dean Stockwell, Russ Tamblyn, Bobby Driscoll and Dennis Hopper.

In 1968 his house in Beverly Glen Canyon was dislodged by rain and collapsed, destroying much of his early work. He found another house in Topanga. Berman loved the spaces of canyons. That same year he emerged to an exhibition at the County Museum of Art. The works consisted of Verifax collage images of a hand holding a transistor radio. A jumble of pictures appeared over the speaker, like visual sounds of a randomly turned dial. There were symbols and mysterious signs from the Hebrew Kabbala. They were exhibited at Manhattan's Whitney Museum. A series of Gemini lithographs extended Berman's recognition internationally in the "Radio Ether Series."

Growing recognition hardly changed Berman's life. He was already in touch with the artists that mattered to him around the globe. His old friend Walter Hopps urged Berman to hold a retrospective exhibition. Berman agreed to consider it after his 50th birthday.

Berman's maxim was, "Art is Love is God." His works will be included with those of his oldest friends opening today at the Newport Harbor Art Museum.

—WILLIAM WILSON

L.A.T. CAL. 2/29/76



ARTIST'S FILE

**mamco**



La Fondation Mamco et le Musée d'art moderne et contemporain ont le plaisir de vous convier le 16 juin 2000 à partir de 18 heures à l'inauguration de :

# Wallace Berman

*"Art Is Love Is God",  
une introduction, 1957 – 1976*

**17.06. → 17.09.2000**

**en collaboration avec la Galerie Nicole Klagsbrun (New York)**

**Le musée est ouvert au public  
tous les jours de 12h à 18h.  
Nocturne le mardi jusqu'à 21h,  
sauf du 15 juin au 15 septembre.  
Fermé le lundi.**

La Fondation Mamco bénéficie du soutien de la Ville et de l'État de Genève (Fonds culturel de la SECSA). Elle remercie l'ensemble de ses partenaires privés, et notamment la Banque Edouard Constant, la Fondation Hans Wilsdorf (montres Rolex), la Fondation de Famille Sandoz, General Motors Europe, l'Hôtel Bel'Espérance, la Loterie Romande, Le Temps, l'Office fédéral de la culture, ainsi que Barbara et Bertrand Cramer et le Consulat général de France à Genève.

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**Wallace Berman** • (1926, Staten Island; 1976, Topanga Canyon) Wallace Berman appartient à cette frange d'artistes de la côte Ouest américaine qui, dans l'ombre des années cinquante et soixante, forgent une culture *beat* dont la littérature reste l'aspect le plus connu, mais qui s'élabora aussi dans le cinéma, la peinture, la photographie, les collages et les assemblages. Jusqu'aux années soixante cette marginalité est encouragée par l'absence, en Californie, d'un véritable réseau marchand et institutionnel, ainsi que par le processus de normalisation sociale et d'expansionnisme politique entamé par une Amérique prospère et conquérante.

En 1957, la Ferus Gallery de Los Angeles lui consacre sa première « et quasiment dernière » exposition personnelle. Les douze *Dessins parchemins* présents renouent avec ses origines juives : sur du papier teinté au brou de noix s'inscrit au hasard cet alphabet hébraïque qui, selon la Kabbale, constitue l'instrument privilégié de la mise en ordre et de l'interprétation du monde. De grands assemblages — à présent disparus — conjuguent par ailleurs constructions en bois, écriture, évocations religieuses et images érotiques qui provoquent la fermeture de l'exposition par les autorités. De dépit, W. Berman quitte cette « cité d'anges dégénérés » pour s'établir à San Francisco

où la culture *beat* est mieux implantée. Il se repliera désormais sur ce milieu, se refusant à toute vie publique. Il se voue alors à une œuvre plus intime, souple dans sa conception, dans sa manipulation et sa diffusion, la revue *Semina* (1955–1964), dont il imprime les neuf numéros sur une petite presse rudimentaire. Sorte de « méta-collage », *Semina* résume à elle seule tant un certain milieu artistique que la démarche globale de W. Berman. Des pochettes réunissent, sur des feuillets libres, poèmes, photographies ou collages de W. Berman lui-même comme de ses amis ou des auteurs du passé qu'il admire (Philip Lamantia, Michael McClure, William Burroughs, Hermann Hesse, Antonin Artaud). L'artiste y décline les thèmes en germe dans ses travaux précédents : la drogue, la folie, la violence, la sexualité et l'art rédempteurs, une mystique du quotidien. Grand joueur lui-même, W. Berman propose ici des cartes que chacun peut disposer et ordonner à son gré, recréant indéfiniment l'œuvre. De retour à Los Angeles en 1961, W. Berman se consacre principalement aux *Verifax Collages* (1961–1976), réalisés à l'aide d'une antique photocopieuse dont la neutralité mécanique va pondérer le contenu iconographique. Les visages effacés des premiers *Verifax* constituent autant une critique de la

dépersonnalisation qu'un dispositif où chacun peut se projeter. Puis les images se précisent (clichés d'actualité ou historiques, figures de l'*underground* ou des minorités, images sexuelles et sensuelles, armes menaçantes, symboles religieux, etc.), mais leur accumulation reste souvent hermétique, laissant volontairement libre cours à l'interprétation. Si les premiers *Verifax* rappellent fortement les *Parchemins*, leur forme se structure ensuite pour proposer un véritable écran à nos projections individuelles : une main, démiurgique mais anonyme, manipule une radio dont le haut-parleur est remplacé par une image. Les *Verifax* zappent en silence sur les ondes de l'image. La répétitivité quasi incantatoire des derniers collages rythme un monde fragmenté et bégayant, suggère une distribution inépuisable mais aussi le flux de la pellicule filmique.

Avant Fluxus et le *mail-art*, l'art de W. Berman se veut avant tout un mode de communication « naturel » et banal. « Art is Love is God » : comme le résume la devise de ce personnage déjà mythique de son vivant, l'art est une plaque sensible, un exercice spirituel de réception et de transmission du monde, un exercice d'inversion des valeurs visant à banaliser le sacré et à sacraliser le quotidien.

BERMAN

ARTIST'S FILE

L | A | L O U V E R |

45 NORTH VENICE BOULEVARD, VENICE, CALIFORNIA 90291 TEL. 310 822 4955 FAX 310 821 7529

March 27, 1997

L. A. Louver is pleased to announce an exhibition of the work of Wallace Berman (1926-1976). This exhibition follows the Whitney Museum of American Art's important exhibition "Beat Culture and the New America 1950-1965", in which Berman's work was widely featured. Berman was influential on both the East and West Coast to a diverse group of artists, writers, musicians and filmmakers. He has maintained a mythical presence, and although there were few exhibitions of his work, works of art were traded, given away, mailed or occasionally sold from the studio; his pervasive spirit influenced all who knew him. The "Beat Culture" exhibition has served to introduce his work to a new generation of younger artists, so the spirit of the work lives on in our own time.

The LA Louver exhibition will present a range of Berman's work; including sculpture, parchment painting, film, verifax collages, assemblages, and the influential journal "Semina". His enigmatic work still holds many mysteries, embodying his credo "Art is Love is God" - as his life was inseparable from his work. Although he abandoned artmaking for five years, following the closure of his Ferus Gallery exhibition, Berman forayed into collage using a verifax machine (an early xerox). The machine suited him perfectly, exploiting the ability for mechanical reproduction and allowing him to create serial images which could be ordered totally in an autonomous, non hierarchical fashion, creating timeless, visual poetry.

Berman's publications "Semina" began in 1955 as an unbound collection of poetry, prose, photography and drawings, all lovingly hand printed by Berman and randomly distributed to Berman's friends through the mail. The nine volumes have been quite faithfully recreated in a facsimile edition produced by George Herms. Because only a few known complete sets of the original "Semina" remain. The gifts, as Berman considered them, embodied the spirit of the times to disseminate contemporary poetry (including a portion of Ginsburg "Howl", Michael McClure's "Peyote Poem" and one of the first translations of Hermann Hesse in English), as well as timeless prose from William Blake, and others. Photographs included Berman's own and others by friends of the time, including Walter Hopps. They are essential documents for anyone interested in the excitement of the heady times 1955-64.

We feel strongly that Berman's work should be represented in your collection. The collection of "Semina's" are important documents, and if you would like to review any of the other works, we would be happy to send photographs of works available.

We look forward to hearing of your interests and hope to speak with you soon.

With best regards,

*K. Davis*  
Kimberly Davis, Director



## Chronology

- 1926 Born on Staten Island, NY  
 1944 Attended Chouinard Art Institute, Los Angeles, CA  
 1944 Attended Jepson Art School, Los Angeles, CA  
 1976 Died in Topanga, CA

## Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 1990 **Wallace Berman** Louver Gallery, New York  
 1988 **The Art of George Herms and Wallace Berman**, Herron Gallery, Indianapolis, IN  
**Wallace Berman: Works from the Estate**, LA Louver, Venice, CA  
 1982 Charles Cowles Gallery, New York  
 1979 LA Louver, Venice, CA  
 1978 **Wallace Berman Retrospective**, Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, CA; travelled (catalogue)  
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY  
 1977 Timothea Stewart Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
 1974 Gemini GEL, Los Angeles, CA  
 1973 The Mermaid Tavern, Topanga, CA  
 1968 Los Angeles County Museum of Art; travelled  
 1967 Topanga Community House, Topanga, CA  
 1965 Studio Exhibition, Los Angeles, CA  
 1957 Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

## Selected Group Exhibitions

- 1990 **Word as Image: American Art 1960 – 90**, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI  
 1989/90 **LA Pop in the Sixties**, Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, CA; travelled  
**Forty Years of California Assemblage**, Wight Art Gallery, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA; travelled  
 1989 **Collage/Assemblage: Nine Points of View**, California State University Hayward, Hayward, CA; travelled  
**The Junk Aesthetic: Assemblage of the 1950's and early 1960's**, Whitney Museum of American Art NY; travelled  
 1988/89 **Poetic Objects**, San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, TX; travelled  
 1988 **Lost and Found in California: Four Decades of Assemblage Art**, James Corcoran Gallery, Santa Monica, CA and G. Ray Hawkins Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (catalogue)  
**Different Drummers**, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC (catalogue)

- 1987 **Assemblage**, Kent Fine Art, Inc., New York, NY (catalogue)  
 1986 **American/European: Painting and Sculpture**, LA Louver, Venice, CA  
 1985 **Past Presence/Contemporary Sources**, College of Notre Dame, Belmont, CA  
**Twentieth Century: The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Collection**, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA  
 1983 **Sight/Vision/The Urban Milieu**, Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA  
 1982 **The Peace Show**, Santa Monica College Art Gallery, Santa Monica, CA  
**The Americans: The Collage**, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX  
 1981 **California: A Sense of Individualism**, LA Louver, Venice, CA  
**Art in Los Angeles: Seventeen Artists in the Sixties**, Los Angeles County Museum of Art; travelled  
**Southern California Artists: 1940 – 1980**, Laguna Beach Museum of Art, Laguna, CA  
 1979/80 **Electroworks**, International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, New York, NY  
 1976 **Painting and Sculpture in California: The Modern Era**, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; travelled  
**The Last Time I Saw Ferus, 1957 – 1966**, Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, CA  
 1975 **Art as a Muscular Principle**, John and Norah Warbeke Gallery, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA  
**Environment and the New Art 1960 – 1975**, University of California, Davis, CA  
**Collage and Assemblage**, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA  
 1974 **Poets of the Cities/New York and San Francisco 1950 – 1965**, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, TX  
 1969 **Pop Art Redefined**, Hayward Gallery, London  
**West Coast 1945 – 1969**, Pasadena Art Museum, CA; travelled  
 1968 **Assemblage in California**, University of California, Irvine, CA  
 1966 **Los Angeles Now**, Robert Fraser Gallery, London

# Wallace Berman

A Gesture Involving  
 Verifax Collage, Photographs,  
 Text and Sculpture

October 13–November 10 1990

You are cordially invited to  
 preview the exhibition on  
 Friday October 12 from  
 6–8pm

Louver Gallery  
 NEW YORK

130 Prince Street  
 New York  
 NY 10012

telephone (212) 925-9205  
 telefax (212) 219-8527



BERMAN, WALLACE

**Wallace Berman**  
**Untitled 1976**  
photographic negative  
6 × 6¼ inches



## L.A. LOUVER

JAN 30 1980

Date June 11, 1979



L. A. Louver Gallery is very pleased to announce its exclusive representation of the Wallace Berman estate.

The artist, killed in a 1976 auto accident near his home in Topanga, was part of the West Coast beat generation cult and is credited with starting the assemblage movement. His art reflects jazz, poetry and street life -- his best known work uses such popular imagery as held-held transistor radio, and verifax copying machine.

A Berman Retrospective has shown at Otis Art Institute and is currently travelling to major western cities.

A selection of Wallace Berman collages, verifaxes, photos and assemblage will be shown at L. A. Louver beginning June 26 through July 14.

Also shown will be prints by the following artists: Robert Barry, Chris Burden, Michael Heizer, Sol LeWitt, Robert Motherwell, Steve Reich, James Rosenquist, Pat Steir and Cy Twombly.

For further information on Wallace Berman, including photographs, please contact the gallery.

LIBRARY

FEB 1 1980

LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
MUSEUM OF ART



# WALLACE BERMAN



וְהִנּוּ שֹׁדֵד  
דָּן מִחֵי נִי מוֹ  
נִמְדָּ שְׁאֵפֶז דִּית  
קֵב זֶהֱע מוֹ שְׁלֵנֵב  
אֶנֶם הַ מִּיכֹוֹתֵנִי צִי  
וְהִנּוּ שֹׁדֵד





שם מסק  
מה יבדו דס' נז

TIMOTHEA  
STEWART  
GALLERY

JULY 1977

669 N. LA CIENEGA BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES, CALIF. 90069





Retrospective Exhibition  
 University of California, Berkeley  
 September, October, November 1979  
 Seattle Art Museum  
 January, February 1980



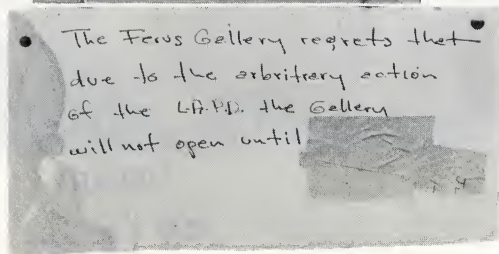
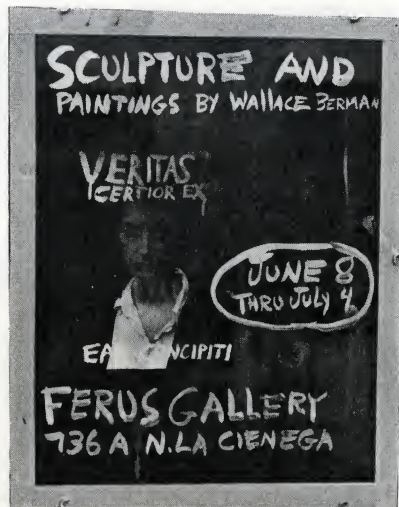
LIBRARY

JAN 18 1980

LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
 MUSEUM OF ART

**WALLACE BERMAN**





ART IS LOVE IS GOD

The Wallace Berman Estate  
is Represented Exclusively by  
L.A. Louver Gallery

Front cover; Posthumous Fragment 1976, 6x6½"  
Inside front; poster notice for Ferus exhibition which was closed  
by police 1957  
Inside back; Polaroid transfer on map 1976, 8x7½"  
Back cover; Posthumous Fragment 1976, 6x6½"

55 North Venice Boulevard, Venice, California 90291  
Tuesday - Saturday 11 am - 6 pm (213) 396-6633



Wallace Berman. *Untitled*, 1966 (detail).  
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Gift of the Lannan Foundation.

## An Evening of Original Writings About the Artist Wallace Berman

*Thursday, October 23 • 6:30 PM*

*Ahmanson Auditorium*

*at MOCA at California Plaza*

*250 S. Grand Ave.*

*Los Angeles, CA 90012*

Presented in collaboration with L.A. Louver, this evening will feature a film and readings about the seminal artist Wallace Berman, whose work is critical to the history of contemporary art in Los Angeles.

Tosh Berman, *independent curator*

Dennis Cooper, *writer*

Richard Grossman, *writer*

Jason Rhoades, *artist*

Laela Lenore Weisbaum, *art historian*

For more information, please call the education department at 213/621-1767.



The Museum of Contemporary Art  
213/626-6222 24-hour recording



# Special Events



Additional  
activities offered  
by The Museum of  
Contemporary Art.

# BERMAN, WALLACE

WALLACE BERMAN (1926-1976)  
Untitled (Posthumous Fragment), 1975  
Verifax collage, 6" x 6-1/2"

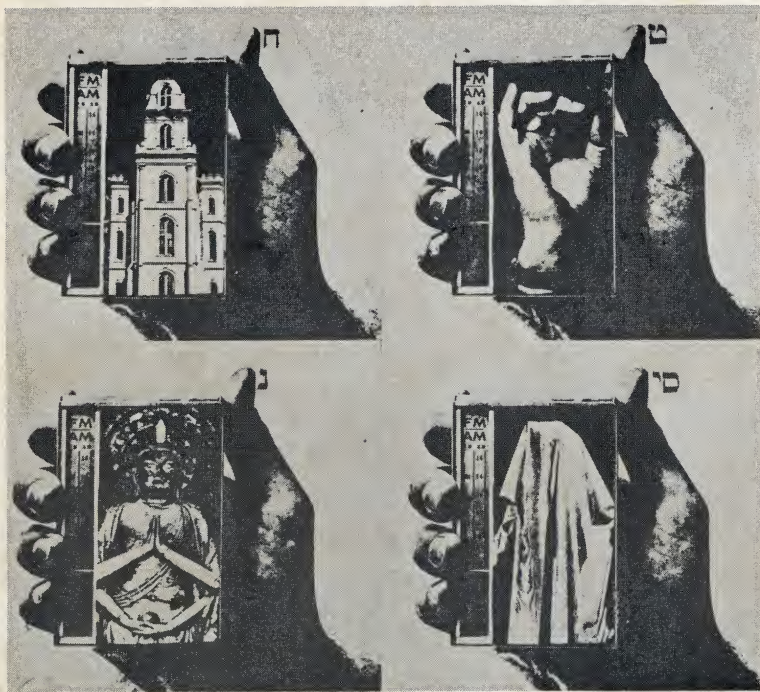




*We wish you  
Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays  
with good health and success in 1987  
from everyone at L.A. LOUVER*

**L.A. LOUVER**

55 North Venice Boulevard Venice California 90291 213/822-4955



*Untitled, 1974*

ONE-MAN

# Wallace Berman Retrospective

LIBRARY

SEP 7 1979

LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
MUSEUM OF ART

September 21–November 11, 1979  
University Art Museum, Berkeley



University Art Museum  
University of California, Berkeley  
2626 Bancroft Way  
Berkeley, California 94720

**Wallace Berman Retrospective**  
September 21–November 11, 1979

Libr/County Musm Art  
5905 Wilshire Blvd  
Los Angeles Ca 90036

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Berkeley, CA Permit 1410

You are cordially invited to see the exhibition  
and attend a reception sponsored by the  
University Art Museum and the University  
Art Museum Council on

In celebration of the exhibition there will be a  
free program of poetry readings, jazz, and film  
in the Museum on Saturday, September 22 and  
Sunday, September 23.

**Thursday, September 20 from 8 to 10 pm.**

This exhibition has been supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Organized by the Otis Art Institute, the exhibition is sponsored by the Fellows of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. The weekend celebration of Wallace Berman's work is co-sponsored by the Fellows of Contemporary Art, the Otis Art Institute and the University Art Museum Council.

Front Cover: Untitled, 10" x 6½" x 4¾"

Back Cover: *Posthumous Fragment*, 1976  
Verifax collage, 6" x 6½"

Fully illustrated catalogue available with an essay by  
Peter Boswell, Scholar-In-Residence at the Walker Art  
Center of Minneapolis.

# Wallace Berman

(1926-1976)

**Works from the Estate**

**January 9 - January 30, 1988**

**You are cordially invited to attend  
a reception for the family**

**Friday, January 8, 1988, 7-9pm**

**L.A. LOUVER**

**77 Market Street, Venice, California 90291  
Tuesday-Saturday 11-5pm and by appointment  
Office hours: Tuesday-Saturday 9-6pm  
213/822-4955  
Validated parking available**



# Wallace Berman



Photography: Thomas P. Vinetz



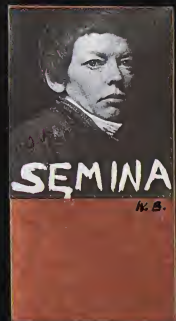
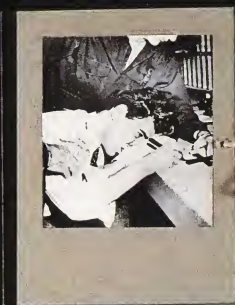
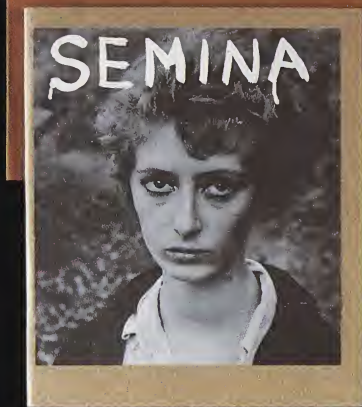
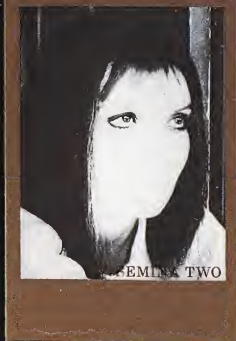
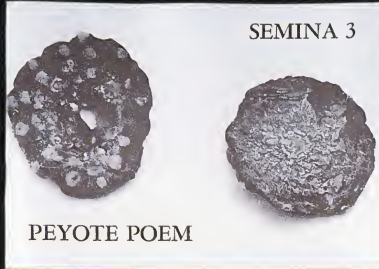
BERMAN,  
WALLACE

ARTIST'S FILE

wallace berman  
(1926-1976)







## Semina

A facsimile edition of Wallace Berman's collection of nine journals devoted to the poetry and art of his time. 1957-1964.

Edition of 320.

Produced by George Herms.

Published by L.A. Louver.

# wallace berman

(1926-1976)

**April 11 ~ May 10, 1997**

**opening reception:**

**Thursday, April 10, 1997, 6:00 - 8:30pm, Valet parking**



## **Untitled 16mm Film 1956-1966**

An evening of short experimental artist's films, including Wallace Berman's "Untitled," 1956-1966, will be presented April 23 at 7:00pm.

Limited seating —

Please RSVP 310-822-4955.

Films include:

<b>Cotillin</b>	Joseph Cornell
<b>The Midnight Party</b>	Joseph Cornell
<b>The Children's Party</b>	Joseph Cornell
<b>Adebar</b>	Peter Kubelka
<b>Untitled</b>	Wallace Berman
<b>Anaemic Cinema</b>	Marcel Duchamp
<b>L'étoile de Mer</b>	Man Ray

Screening time approximately 45 minutes.



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HOURS: TUESDAY - SATURDAY 10:00AM - 5:00PM OR BY APPOINTMENT

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VALIDATED PARKING AVAILABLE

ADVA  
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BERMAN,  
WALLACE

WALLACE

ARTIST'S FILE

ARTIST'S FILE

wallace berman

(1926-1976)





BERMAN WALLACE

ARTIST'S FILE

L | A | L O U V E R

45 NORTH VENICE BOULEVARD, VENICE, CALIFORNIA 90291 TEL. 310 822 4955 FAX 310 821 7529

## SHIRLEY AND TOSH BERMAN

ALONG WITH

## LA LOUVER

ARE PLEASED TO INVITE YOU TO

# Wallace Berman

1926 - 1976

### Reflections on Berman

April 30, 1997

7:00 PM

critical and poetic readings

in celebration of Wallace Berman

PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE:

DENNIS COOPER RICHARD GROSSMAN JOHN PEARSON

### Experimental Artist's Films

April 23, 1997

7:30 PM

(45 minute screening)

Artist's Include:

Joseph Cornell

Peter Kubelka

Wallace Berman

Marcel Duchamp

Man Ray

Seating is limited for both events.

Please RSVP

(310) 822.4955

by April 20

CONTINUING EXHIBITIONS:

Wallace Berman 1926 - 1976

Don Suggs Hexane Photographs

April 10 - May 10, 1997

LA LOUVER 45 N. VENICE BLVD., VENICE, CA 90291

BERMAN, WALLACE

DIED 2/17/76

LAT CAL. 2/29/76



June 26 - July 14

ONE-MAN

Works by

**WALLACE BERMAN**

Art is Love is God

LIBRARY

JAN 4 1980

LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
MUSEUM OF ART

Graphics by

ROBERT BARRY

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55 North Venice Boulevard Venice, California 90291

Tuesday - Saturday 11 am - 6 pm (213) 396-6633



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ONE-MAN

TIMOTHEA  
STEWART  
GALLERY

WALLACE  
BERMAN

OPENING EXHIBITION

SATURDAY: JULY 9, 1977 3-6 PM

SUNDAY: JULY 10, 1977 1-5 PM

669 N. LA CIENEGA BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
90069 213: 652-4460

LIBRARY

JAN 11 1978

LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
MUSEUM OF ART

The Board of Directors of Fellows of Contemporary Art  
cordially invites you to a preview reception  
at Otis Art Institute Gallery,  
Sunday, October 22, 1978,  
from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

ONE-MAN



## WALLACE BERMAN RETROSPECTIVE

An exhibition initiated and sponsored by  
Fellows of Contemporary Art  
in cooperation with  
the Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County,  
Otis Art Institute,  
and the National Endowment for the Arts  
a federal agency, Washington, D.C.

LIBRARY

DEC 7 1978

LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
MUSEUM OF ART

*Please present this invitation at the door.*

Otis Art Institute Gallery  
2401 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California 90057  
October 24 - November 26, 1978  
Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Sunday, 1 - 5 p.m.

*Mr. Maurice Tuchman  
Curator of Modern Art  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
5905 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, California  
90036*





Joan dear -  
for your birth -  
date Love, Wallace  
Sept. 9. 72

ONE-MAN

# WALLACE BERMAN EXHIBITION



LIBRARY  
DEC 09 1977  
LOAN DEPT





DOCS 94 18A  
70044711X

**JULY - AUGUST 1977**



## BOXED CITY

My beautiful wife

Rearranges deaf photographs talks

Rococo & dances off four walls

Son Tosh pencils the faithful

Image & ignores the subtle drama

Stoned in black corduroy I continue

To separate seeds

From the bulk.

After twenty-two years of absorbing the art of Wallace Berman I am asked to write a "guide to this exhibition." A biographical statement for those who never had the pleasure to know the man or his work. No easy task. I chose the autobiographical poem (what poems aren't?). "Boxed City" to begin with because the last two lines seem to tell most clearly in the artist's own words what his life's work is.

For background: born in 1926 Tompkinsville, New York. Lived in Los Angeles most of his life. Developed a unique body of work of which the major facets are represented in this exhibition.

The early drawings: from a period where his work illustrated one of the first albums of the jazz giant Charlie Parker. Berman's work continued to reflect the spirit of jazz from that period in the 1940s right thru the last works in the 1970s.

The sculptures range from wood (the Homage to Herman Hesse) to the rocks and boxes and finally the rocks with chain. His first exhibition at Ferus Gallery in 1957 included four major sculptures that triggered the golden age of California assemblage. The restored Homage to Hesse is the purest example of seemingly random yet precise placement of components.

The later rocks with their Hebrew characters echo ancient yet somehow fit a contemporary sense of ecology ---the artist as a non-raper of the planet.

of the verifax machine. The verifax was to become from 1964 on, his way of editing reality.

The verifax works hold up a two-way mirror. The window in radio in the hand opens out onto the "real" world yet somehow reveals our own inner psychic state by our reaction to the image.

The larger verifax works present choices. SCANNING. Poems are made out of pictures. We can read them as freeze frames in a movie (he was a film-maker), or we can chew on each image as a cow chews it's cud or we can let our gaze wander and wonder at the painterly use of chemicals, the draftsmanship of the scissor's point tracing notations on wet verifax pages. See how no image becomes an image.

In all the works and the issues of SEMINA, mortality was dissolved, William Blake rode with Jack Dempsey. A work of art is a work of art no matter when done or by whom. This was one of the great gifts of Wallace Berman. To expand the boundaries of content while setting precise standards of visual presentation.

Another gift was (and still is) the alchemical marriage of ideas and people; as well as images. He brought together poets, film-makers, painters, dancers, printers, actors, musicians, photographers, gamblers, bar-keeps, hustlers. They in turn were recipients of a special form of work. The visual equivalent of occasional verse. Birth-day cards, weddings, anniversaries, thank-you notes, congratulations on exhibition openings, babies born, dinners



Herman Hesse) to the rocks and boxes and finally the rocks with chain. His first exhibition at Ferus Gallery in 1957 included four major sculptures that triggered the golden age of California assemblage. The restored Homage to Hesse is the purest example of seemingly random yet precise placement of components.

The later rocks with their Hebrew characters echo ancient yet somehow fit a contemporary sense of ecology ---the artist as a non-raper of the planet.

Always a stalwart in the fight for freedom of expression (an agent provocateur even) he chose as a vehicle SEMINA a magazine he edited from 1954-1964. SEMINA was composed of poems, drawings, photographs. The seventh issue (source of "Boxed City") was entirely Berman's work. The list of contributors in the other issues is a good gauge of the creative forces at work in those years. A fine line drawing by Cameron in issue one was on the floor of a sculpture called Temple and caused the closing of the 1957 Ferus show.

As a photographer from the mid-fifties on, he captured the passing parade of angels in human disguise, composed vivid still lifes, and prophetically brought up to date those archetype symbols we know of as the collective unconscious. This process is continued in the verifax works.

His photographic work moved smoothly into the use

standards of visual presentation.

Another gift was (and still is) the alchemical marriage of ideas and people; as well as images. He brought together poets, film-makers, painters, dancers, printers, actors, musicians, photographers, gamblers, bar-keepers, hustlers. They in turn were recipients of a special form of work. The visual equivalent of occasional verse. Birthday cards, weddings, anniversaries, thank-you notes, congratulations on exhibition openings, babies born, dinners cooked as well as formal illustrations for poets' books, covers, posters. If all the correspondence (each a gem and precious beyond words to the receiver) were laid side by side they would truly reach to the moon. A few are in this exhibition.

A note about the Hebrew characters. Calligraphy and the qabalah overlay to present us with automatic writing. They say what we see.

This is true of all the works in this exhibition. The silence and the sound series; which is positive, which negative?

In closing this attempt at providing a key to this exhibition let me slip you the divine sense of humor: Wallace, chuckling at my efforts to express the inexplicable. I think the Herman Hesse poem that Wallace printed in his very first SEMINA will complete this statement.

G. Herms

#### TO A TOCCATA by BACH

Primeval silence is chained in rigidity . . . Darkness prevails . . .  
Then a ray of light breaks through a rift in jagged clouds,  
Seizes world depths from the blind nothingness,  
Builds up towering masses, burrows through the night with light,  
Foreshadows pitch and peak, slope and ravine,  
Lets freely blow azure breezes, leaves the earth a dense mass.

The lightbeam divides creatively into constructive deed and  
Violence the unfolding pregnancy:  
The startled world is kindled with a flash:  
Wherever the seed of light, the magnificent, falls,  
Comes change, things are fashioned, and it proclaims  
Praise to Life and victory to Light, the Creator.

And further the great creative urge swings back toward God,  
And surges through the inner being of every creature  
Toward the Paternal Spirit.  
It becomes desire and need, speech, picture, song,  
It heaps world on world to form a triumphal arch  
Of the vault of Heaven!  
It is drive, it is spirit, it is struggle and joy.  
It is love.

HERMAN HESSE

(Translation: Ruth Baker Day)



## EXHIBITION LIST

1. Art is Love is God. 1957  
Photograph of Ferus Gallery poster by Charles Brittin  
6 3/4 x 3"  
Collection Charles Brittin, Los Angeles
2. Ferus Gallery, LAPD Closure. 1957  
Photograph by Charles Brittin  
8 1/4 x 8"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
3. Wallace and Shirley Berman, Crater Lane, Los Angeles.  
1961 (above)  
Living Room, Wallace and Shirley Berman, Crater Lane,  
Los Angeles. 1961 (below)  
Photographs by Charles Brittin  
Each: 7 1/2 x 9 1/4"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
4. Wallace Berman. 1957  
Photograph by Charles Brittin  
7 1/2 x 10"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
5. Wallace Berman, Window of Stone Bros. Store, Sawtelle  
Blvd., Los Angeles. 1957  
Photograph by Charles Brittin  
8 1/4 x 8 1/4"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
6. Untitled. 1947  
Pencil on paper  
10 1/2 x 8 1/4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
7. Untitled. 1947  
Pencil on paper  
10 1/2 x 8 1/4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga  
California
8. Silent. 1975  
Verifax  
30 1/2 x 33 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
9. Sound. 1975  
Verifax  
30 1/2 x 33 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
10. Silent. 1975  
Verifax  
30 1/2 x 33 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
11. Sound. 1975  
Verifax  
30 1/2 x 33 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
12. Shuffle. 1969  
Verifax collage with acrylic on paper
23. Silent. 1968-69  
Verifax  
24 3/4 x 26 3/4"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
24. Silent. 1968-69  
Verifax  
24 3/4 x 26 3/4"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
25. Sound. 1972  
Verifax  
12 1/4 x 13 1/4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
26. Untitled. 1956-57  
Wood stain on parchment on canvas  
20 x 20"  
Collection Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California
27. Lenny Bruce. 1956  
Collage with butterfly wings  
12 1/2 x 5 3/4"  
Collection Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California
28. Trophi. 1964  
Verifax with acrylic  
7 1/4 x 6 1/4"  
Collection Russel Tamblyn
29. Birthday Card for Joan. 1972  
Verifax with Letraset  
11 1/2 x 8 1/2"  
Collection Joan Simon, Malibu, California
30. Untitled. 1972  
Verifax  
10 3/4 x 8 3/4"  
Collection Toni Basil, Topanga, California
31. Self-Portrait. 1969  
Photograph with postage stamp collage  
5 1/2 x 4 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
32. Untitled. 1972  
Photograph collage  
5 x 3 3/4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
33. Shirley and Tosh. 1956  
Photograph with hand cross-hatching  
5 1/4 x 3 3/4"  
Collection Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California
34. Untitled. 1974  
Verifax with Letraset and acrylic on paper  
8 3/4 x 7 1/2"  
Collection Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California
35. Untitled. 1971  
Verifax with Letraset and acrylic on paper  
8 1/2 x 6 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California



- 30 1/2 x 33 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
11. Sound. 1975  
Verifax  
30 1/2 x 33 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
12. Shuffle. 1969  
Verifax collage with acrylic on paper  
13 x 14"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
13. Shuffle. 1969  
Verifax collage with acrylic on paper  
13 x 14"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles  
California
14. Silent. 1967-69  
Verifax  
49 1/4 x 46 3/4"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
15. Shuffle. 1969  
Verifax collage with acrylic on paper  
13 x 14"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, Calif.
16. Shuffle. 1969  
Verifax collage with acrylic on paper  
13 x 14"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
17. Homage to Herman Hesse. 1954  
Wood sculpture  
19 3/4 x 21 x 17 3/4"  
Collection Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California
18. Silent. 1968-69  
Verifax  
13 x 14"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
19. Silent. 1967  
Verifax  
49 1/4 x 46 3/4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
20. Silent. 1968-69  
Verifax  
13 x 14"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
21. 400-300-50. 1974  
Rock with acrylic and black chain  
8 1/4 x 7 1/2 x 7 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
22. Silent. 1972  
Verifax  
12 1/4 x 13 1/4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
34. Untitled. 1974  
Verifax with Letraset and acrylic on paper  
8 3/4 x 7 1/2"  
Collection Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California
35. Untitled. 1971  
Verifax with Letraset and acrylic on paper  
8 1/2 x 6 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
36. Bob Dylan. 1970  
Verifax  
10 1/4 x 9"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
37. Untitled. 1970  
Verifax with acrylic on paper  
10 x 6 1/4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
38. Untitled. 1974  
Letraset and acrylic on paper (music sheet)  
12 x 9"  
Collection Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California
39. Untitled. 1972  
Wooden box with glass front, pebbles  
9 1/2 x 13 1/2 x 6 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
40. Office Management. 1964  
Verifax on book page  
12 3/4 x 13 3/4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
41. National Debt. 1964  
Verifax on book pages  
10 3/4 x 8"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
42. Radio-Aether Rock. 1974  
Rock with black chain on wooden base with acrylic  
6 x 13 x 13"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
- 43.-57. Radio-Aether Series. 1966-74  
13 verifax pieces and Title Page and cover  
Each piece: 12 3/4 x 13 3/4"; cover: 13 x 13 1/2"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
58. Jay de Feo. 1959  
Photograph with hand cross-hatching  
5 x 4 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
59. Jay de Feo. 1959  
Photograph with hand cross-hatching  
4 1/2 x 3 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California



60. Jay de Feo. 1959  
Photograph with hand cross-hatching  
5 x 4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
61. Jay de Feo. 1959  
Photograph with hand cross-hatching  
5 1/2 x 4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
62. Jay de Feo. 1959  
Photograph  
7 x 6"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
63. Jay de Feo. 1959  
Photograph with hand cross-hatching  
4 1/2 x 4 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
64. Jay de Feo. 1959  
Photograph with hand cross-hatching  
4 1/2 x 3 1/4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
65. Jay de Feo. 1959  
Photograph with hand cross-hatching  
5 x 4 1/4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
66. Jay de Feo. 1959  
Photograph with hand cross-hatching  
5 x 4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California

67. Shuffle. 1972-74  
Verifax collage with acrylic on paper  
12 3/4 x 13 3/4"  
Collection Timothea Stewart, Los Angeles
68. Bebop Jazz. 1959  
Record cover  
9 3/4 x 10 1/2"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
69. Blurb. c. mid-40s  
Jazz magazine offer.  
6 x 3"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga,  
California
70. Untitled. 1971  
Rock with acrylic  
8 14/16 x 8 1/4 x 8 1/4"  
Collection Joan Simon, Malibu, California
71. Untitled. 1970  
Pen and ink on paper, both sides (Interview)  
19 x 13 3/4"  
Collection Shirley and Tosh Berman, Topanga, California
72. Birthday Gift. 1967  
Leather pouch, pen and ink on brown paper, shoe knife,  
sea shell, match box with dried flower, amethyst, blue  
marble, on wood base with plexiglass case  
8 x 8 x 8"  
Collection Joan Simon, Malibu, California
73. Temple. 1957  
Photograph of original work  
76 1/8 x 47 3/4"  
Collection Dean Stockwell, Topanga, California

The poster for this exhibition was designed by Dean Stockwell  
from a photograph taken by George Herms.

# WALLACE BERMAN

1926-1976

## EXHIBITIONS

"Wallace Berman," Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, 1957  
Studio Exhibition, Beverly Glen, Los Angeles, 1965  
"Los Angeles Now," Robert Fraser Gallery, London, 1966  
Topanga Community House; one-day, one-artist exhibition; Topanga, California,  
1967  
"Serial Imagery," Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena, 1967  
"Wallace Berman," Los County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1968  
"Assemblage in California," University of California, Irvine, 1968  
"Wallace Berman: Verifax Collages," The Jewish Museum, New York, 1968



EXHIBITIONS

"Wallace Berman," Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, 1957  
Studio Exhibition, Beverly Glen, Los Angeles, 1965  
"Los Angeles Now," Robert Fraser Gallery, London, 1966  
Topanga Community House; one-day, one-artist exhibition; Topanga, California,  
1967  
"Serial Imagery," Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena, 1967  
"Wallace Berman," Los County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1968  
"Assemblage in California," University of California, Irvine, 1968  
"Wallace Berman: Verifax Collages," The Jewish Museum, New York, 1968  
Mermaid Tavern, one-day exhibition; Topanga, California, 1973  
"Art as a Muscular Principle," Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass., 1975  
"Poets of the Cities New York and San Francisco 1950-1965," Dallas Museum of  
Fine Arts, Dallas; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco;  
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Conn.; traveling exhibition, 1974-75  
"California Painting and Sculpture: The Modern Era;" San Francisco Museum of  
Modern Art, San Francisco; National Collection of Fine Art, Smithsonian  
Institution, Washington, D.C.; traveling exhibition, 1976-77  
"The Last Time I saw Ferus," Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport, California, 1976  
"Southern California Assemblage," Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art,  
Los Angeles, 1975  
"Environment and the New Art 1960-1975," University of California, Davis, 1975

PUBLICATIONS

Semina, Issues 1-9, edited and printed by hand by Wallace Berman on available  
papers; each edition approximately 200.  
Radio-Aether Series, Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, 1974  
Numerous graphic contributions: book covers, posters and poetry illustrations

AWARDS

William and Noma Copley Foundation Award, 1965  
National Council of Arts and Humanities Grant, 1967  
Award for Friends of the New Cinema, given by Jonas Mikas, film maker and  
art and view critic for The Village Voice, N.Y.

**ART IS LOVE IS GOD**

**TIMOTHEA  
STEWART  
GALLERY**

669 N. LA CIENEGA BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
90069 213: 652-4460



April 30 / June 2, 1968

# Los Angeles County Museum of Art

## Catalog of Works

All works lent by the artist unless otherwise indicated.

1.  
**Scope**, 1965, verifax collage, 32 x 38".  
*Lent by Dennis Hopper, Los Angeles.*
2.  
**Bouquet**, 1965, verifax collage, 28 x 29-5/16".  
*Collection Los Angeles County Museum of Art.*
3.  
**Proof**, 1965, verifax collage and various media, 10 x 11½".
- 4/11.  
**Silence Series**, 1965-68, verifax collage, 26 x 24".  
*8 collages from a series in progress.*
12.  
**Untitled**, 1965, verifax collage, 13 x 12".
- 13/19.  
**Sound Series**, 1967-68, verifax collage and acrylic, 12½ x 13½".  
*7 collages from a series in progress. Number 7 lent by Nicholas Wilder.*
20.  
**Untitled**, 1967, verifax collage, 48 x 45½".  
*Lent by The Kleiner Foundation, Beverly Hills.*
21.  
**Untitled**, 1967, verifax collage and acrylic, 14 x 18½".
22.  
**Untitled**, 1968, verifax collage and acrylic, 12 x 13".

Deborah Susman

# Wallace Berman





Wallace Berman (b. 1926), a local artist living in Topanga Canyon, has been a seminal figure in the development of art on the West Coast. In 1949 Berman began to make sculptures from the scraps and reject materials he found lying around the factory where he worked finishing antique furniture. As he came into contact with other artists with similar interests, he began in his unobtrusive way, to exert an influence which helped to establish the California assemblage movement as a unique phenomenon in American art.

This presentation, comprising twenty-two "verifax collages," is a representative selection of the artist's work from the past four years; it is also his first public showing in Los Angeles in over a decade. Berman moved as naturally into this type of art as he had into assemblage sculpture. Several years ago he was given an old verifax machine whose expressive possibilities he has since explored intensively. The printed images (often deriving from popular sources like magazines and newspapers) are mounted in collage fashion onto a flat surface, sometimes with solid areas of bright acrylic paint. Berman's assemblage sculptures were poetic statements evoked from the free association of diverse elements; the verifax collages indicate a similar involvement in which pictorial images, cabalistic symbols, colors and occasionally words, mingle in a fluid way, allowing a multiplicity of meaning according to the spectator's own sensibility.

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## Wallace Berman

Whose presence has been felt in the best of ways — inconspicuously, masterfully, as of a prodigy who was There from the beginning. His works belong to the realm of apocalypse, the newest and oldest fused to explode the magical realism that is American consciousness upon the mind, now returned to the heart. The key to Berman's art is the absolutely shy Blakean belief that chaos is the Aleph, that infinite letter of the breath of a man streaming invisibly on, with his acts of art changing the whole universe by making this little Atom of a world go round. To learn this art is to learn how to rearrive at the cycles and wheels of childhood, to hear the music of the western spokes as one travels eastward through the cool night spaces of The City of the Angels within everywhere.

Through the window from inside  
the cafe is in the street  
the trees are in the cafe  
the silver espresso trees  
a couple is kissing under  
the outside of inside  
the soft yellow lights  
in the gutter cafe  
Ray Charles is singing  
Georgia on the jukebox  
at the corner of the  
Rue Delambre  
inside the cafe  
Wallace Berman comes by  
and frames it and calls it  
America  
and gives it away

BERMAN  
W.  
ONE-MAN

אבגדהוזחטיכלמנסעפצקרשת

100. 70. 400. 300. 200. 90. 80. 60. 50. 40. 30. 20. 10. 9. 8. 7. 6. 5. 4. 3. 2. 1.

RADIO/AETHER SERIES 1966/1974

WALLACE BERMAN



13 BOXED OFFSET LITHOGRAPHS  
FROM THE ORIGINAL *VERIFAX* SERIES.  
PRINTED IN DUOTONE BY  
BLAIR LITHOGRAPH COMPANY  
ON STARWHITE COVER.  
MOUNTED ON GEMINI RAGBOARD.  
12 X 13". EDITION OF 50.  
TITLE PAGE SIGNED AND NUMBERED  
BY THE ARTIST.

RADIO/AETHER SERIES 1966/1974

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GEMINI G.E.L. 8365 MELROSE AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90069/213 651 0513





# Wallace Berman: Verifax Collages



**The Jewish Museum, New York  
September 17 – November 17, 1968**

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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
OCT 18 1968



### Wallace Berman and Collage Verité

Wallace Berman began his artistic career as a draftsman who, without benefit of art school training or association with artists, drew what interested him. One of his first published drawings was used as an album cover for a Charlie Parker record in 1946 or 1947. Berman remains a visual bibliophile of popular culture and has added to his early concern for jazz music, musicians, and their life style an ever increasing number of interests which he personalizes in collage form. One doesn't need a gloss to appreciate the subtle and fascinating accumulation of poetic references, caballistic signs, allusions to friends and particular aspects of nature which make up the parts of Berman's art. One feels a very organic adjustment of the artist's ambition and the fulfillment of same within each of the early works. The collages were begun in 1949 after Berman had found a ready source of scrap wood material within a furniture refinishing factory where he worked at the time. Berman's diminutive collages pre-date the entire assemblage movement on the West Coast by three to five years and provided iconographic references as well as formal solutions for many West Coast artists. Until 1964 Berman's concerns paralleled those of Bruce Conner, George Herms and Edward Kienholz as well as other assemblage artists in California. The acquisition in the same year of a *Verifax* office copying machine led directly to the flatter, more pictorial collage-paintings of the past four years. The change which ensued allowed Berman to transform the dizzying variety of mass-media photo material into cut, pasted and painted pictorial elements whose contrast and emphasis could be adjusted by feeding the material through the copying machines any number of times until the desired balance of contrast, complexity and richness of incident were achieved. Consider for a moment the value of Berman's working method. The flexibility of a photo darkroom is available to Berman without the hindrance of a camera. The camera is eschewed in most cases because the vast supply of images are available everywhere. (Bruce Conner's early films which relied on stock footage are examples of the same creative thought process applied to films). A further advantage in the method is Berman's ability to retain progress proofs of each work to which he can refer rather than depending on erasure, as would a

painter; he relies on a process of multiplication. At no point is Berman's art a one-shot chance encounter but rather a series of preserved moments which can be filed away and examined at a later time. Perhaps the most extraordinary advantage within Berman's system is speed of execution. Painterly choice is married to photo quickness and the two methods interact with athletic grace. Berman is one part painter, one part still photographer and one part film-maker, with the latter pushing hard on the first two for dominance.

The film-like nature emphasizes in stasis the experience of the cinematic jump cut. At the same moment one becomes aware of the film as source material, the viewer sees the cinema verité nature of each image. The frame units of the work can be read left to right, top to bottom with as much ease as one scans a sentence. Quick scanning causes the viewer to involuntarily react to the experience as he would while viewing a vanguard film. While enjoying the experience for a few minutes, I turned away and faced a silk-screened picture by Andy Warhol which includes filmic repetition of elements formally similar to those employed by Berman. Obvious size differences aside, the Warhol is roughly double the height and width of the Berman collage; the differences of intent became obvious. For example, Warhol's picture, one of the Disaster Series, remains vague in the mind, a disaster of banality, of ennui, wherein a horrific scene is drained of specific emotional content and exists as a tough and aloof object. Presuming a spectrum of esthetic responses, the Berman flashes at the other end of the fictitious spectrum. The Berman collage bombards the viewer eliciting polymorphous esthetic response to its varied parts.

In summary, one finds Wallace Berman a mature artist whose contribution to the post-war assemblage movement has been undervalued or virtually unknown. His interest in jazz, rock and folk music, contemporary poetry and underground publishing dovetail with the artist's allusive depiction of the heroes and heroines who struggle in these fields. A sense of the epic is revealed at the core of Berman's commitment to his subjects which is seldom detached or ironic. Rather throughout the past fifteen years one realizes Berman feels at one with his subjects and treats them with a certain deference and understanding and at singular moments, love.

James Monte

The exhibition was directed by  
Kynaston L. McShine  
Curator of Painting and Sculpture.





THE JEWISH MUSEUM under the auspices of  
The Jewish Theological Seminary of America  
1109 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York



Born 1926 (Aquarius)  
 William and Noma Copley Foundation  
 Award 1965  
 Lives and works in Topanga, California

*One-man exhibitions*  
 Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, 1957  
 Studio exhibition, Los Angeles, 1965  
 Topanga Community House, 1967  
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1968

*Group exhibition*  
 "Los Angeles Now,"  
 Robert Fraser Gallery, London, 1966

COPLANS, JOHN. "Art is Love is God,"  
*Artforum*, vol. II, no. 9, March 1964,  
 pp. 26-67.  
 COPLANS, JOHN. "Circle of Styles  
 on the West Coast," *Art in America*,  
 no. 3, June 1964, pp. 24-41.  
 COPLANS, JOHN. "Los Angeles:  
 Object Lesson," *Arts Magazine*,  
 vol. 64, no. 9, January 1966,  
 pp. 40, 67-68.  
 "Wallace Berman's Verifax Collages,"  
*Artforum*, vol. IV, no. 5,  
 January 1966, pp. 39-41.  
 Robert Fraser Gallery, London,  
 January 31-February 19, 1966,  
*Los Angeles Now*. Text by  
 John Coplans.  
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
 Los Angeles, April 30-June 2, 1968,  
*Wallace Berman*. Texts by  
 Jack Hirschman and Gail R. Scott.

**Catalogue of the Exhibition**  
 Height precedes width

1. *Bouquet*. 1964  
 Verifax collage  
 28 x 30 in.  
 Collection Los Angeles County  
 Museum of Art

2. *Scope*. 1965  
 Verifax collage  
 38 x 32 in.  
 Collection Dennis Hopper,  
 Los Angeles
3. *Proof*. 1965  
 Verifax collage and various media  
 10 x 11½ in.  
 Collection Donald Morand,  
 Los Angeles

4. *Untitled*. 1965  
 Verifax collage  
 25 x 20 in.  
 Collection Charles Cowles,  
 New York

5. *Untitled*. 1965  
 Verifax collage  
 13 x 12 in.  
 Lent by the artist

6. *Silent Series #1*. 1965-68  
 Verifax collage  
 24 x 26 in.  
 Lent by the artist

7. *Silent Series #2*. 1965-68  
 Verifax collage  
 24 x 26 in.  
 Collection Dean Stockwell,  
 Topanga, California

8. *Silent Series #7*. 1965-68  
 Verifax collage  
 24 x 26 in.  
 Lent by the artist

9. *Silent Series #8*. 1965-68  
 Verifax collage  
 24 x 26 in.  
 Collection Mr. and Mrs.  
 J. Patrick Lannan, Jr.,  
 Los Angeles

10. *Silent Series #9*. 1965-68  
 Verifax collage  
 24 x 26 in.  
 Collection Mr. and Mrs.  
 James Butler, Los Angeles

11. *Silent Series #10*. 1965-68  
 Verifax collage  
 24 x 26 in.  
 Lent by the artist

12. *Silent Series #11*. 1965-68  
 Verifax collage  
 24 x 26 in.  
 Collection L. M. Asher Family,  
 Los Angeles

13. *Sound Series #2*. 1967-68  
 Verifax collage and acrylic  
 12½ x 13½ in.  
 Lent by the artist

14. *Sound Series #3*. 1967-68  
 Verifax collage and acrylic  
 12½ x 13½ in.  
 Lent by the artist

15. *Sound Series #4*. 1967-68  
 Verifax collage and acrylic  
 12½ x 13½ in.  
 Lent by the artist

16. *Sound Series #5*. 1967-68  
 Verifax collage and acrylic  
 12½ x 13½ in.  
 Lent by the artist

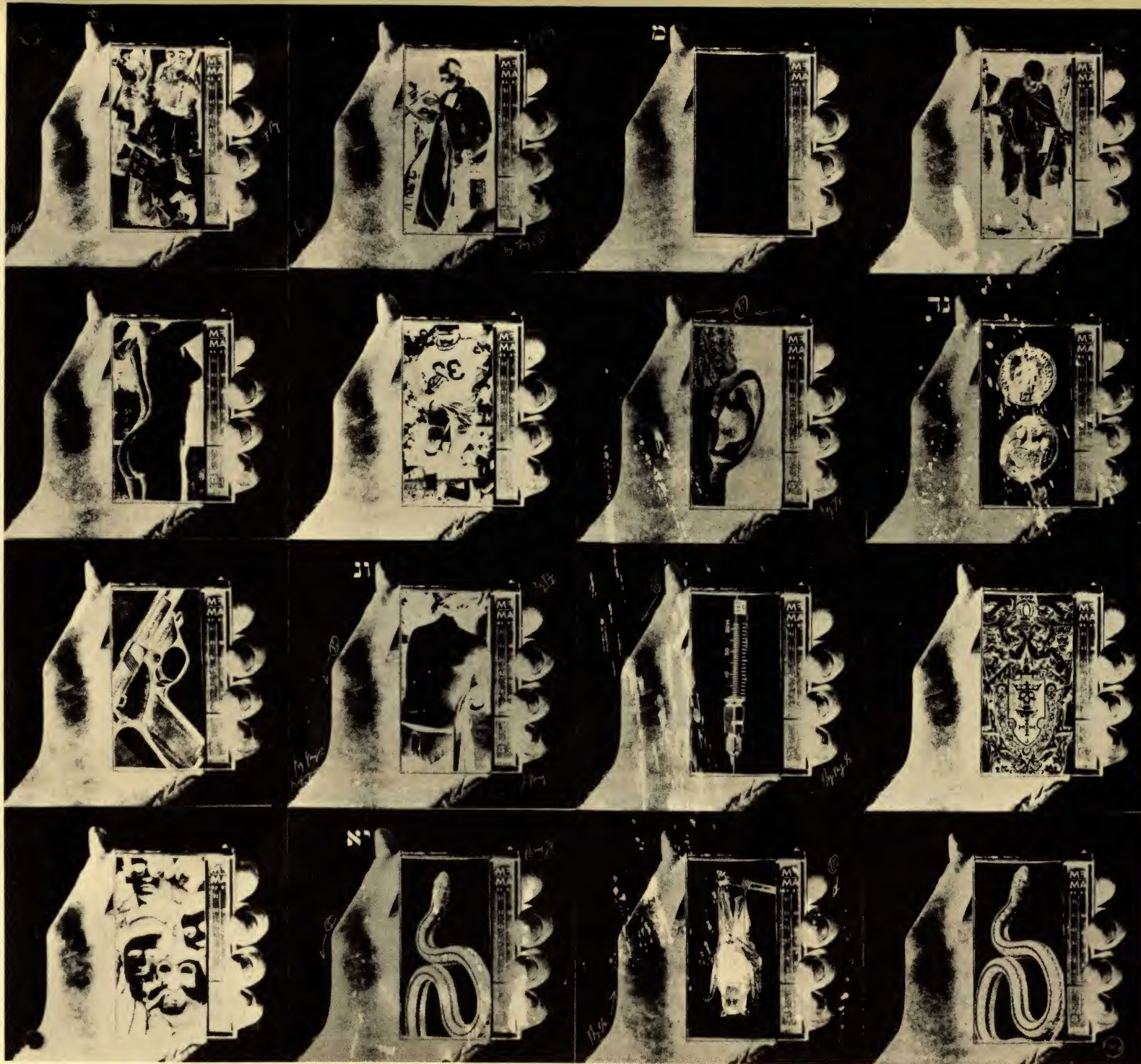
17. *Sound Series #6*. 1967-68  
 Verifax collage and acrylic  
 12½ x 13½ in.  
 Lent by the artist

18. *Sound Series #7*. 1967-68  
 Verifax collage and acrylic  
 12½ x 13½ in.  
 Collection Nicholas Wilder,  
 Los Angeles

19. *Sound Series #8*. 1967-68  
 Verifax collage and acrylic  
 12½ x 13½ in.  
 Collection Nicholas Wilder,  
 Los Angeles

20. *Untitled*. 1968  
 Verifax collage  
 48 x 45½ in.  
 Lent by the artist

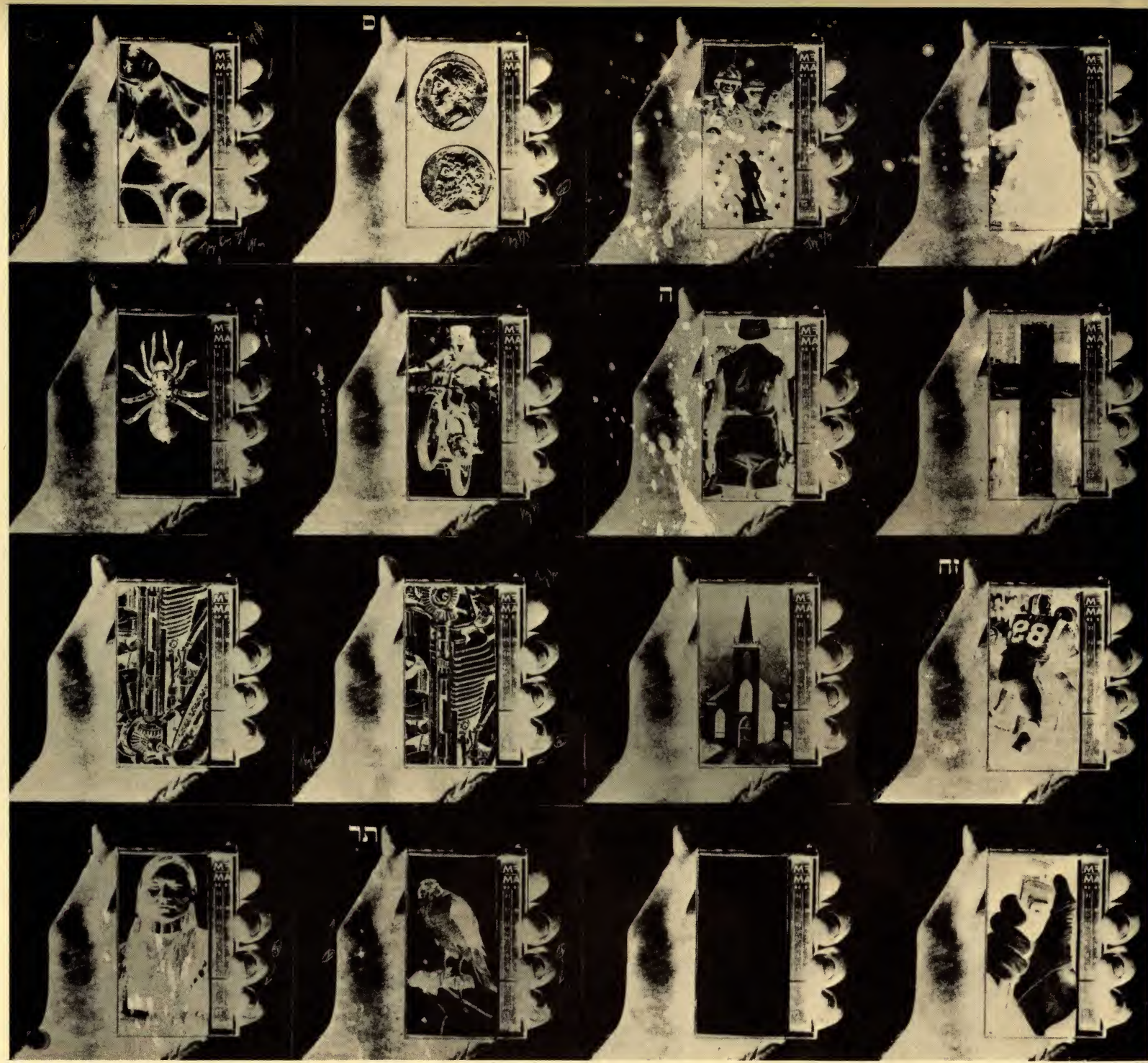












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# SEMINA CULTURE

# Wallace Berman & His Circle

Co-curators: Michael Duncan and Kristine McKenna



SANTA MONICA:MUSEUM:OF ART

SEPTEMBER 17–NOVEMBER 26, 2005

Bergamot Station G1  
2525 Michigan Avenue  
Santa Monica, CA  
90404

Tel 310.586.6488  
Fax 310.586.6487  
info@smmoa.org  
www.smmoa.org

SANTA MONICA: MUSEUM: OF ART

**Museum hours:**  
Tuesday through Saturday  
11 am to 6 pm  
Closed Sunday, Monday,  
and all legal holidays

HOWARD N FOX  
CURATOR OF 20TH CENTURY ART  
LOS ANGELES MUSEUM OF ART  
5905 WILSHIRE BLVD  
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# SEMINA CULTURE

## Wallace Berman & His Circle

Co-curators: Michael Duncan and Kristine McKenna

SANTA MONICA: MUSEUM: OF ART

SEPTEMBER 17–NOVEMBER 26, 2005

### ● Opening Reception: Friday, September 16

6–7 pm Members' Preview: Walk-through with  
**Michael Duncan and Kristine McKenna**  
7–9 pm Public Opening

**S A T U R D A Y** ▶ **September 17, 3:00 pm**  
*Double Exposure: A Photographic Portrait of the California Underground*  
Commentary by **Charles Brittin**  
and **Russel Tamblyn**, moderated by **Michael Duncan and Kristine McKenna**  
Free Admission

**S U N D A Y** ▶ **September 25, 5:00 pm**  
*Beat Cinema*  
Presented by the American Cinematheque at the Aero Theatre  
1328 Montana Avenue at 14th Street  
Santa Monica, CA

A 90-minute program of short films:  
Wallace Berman, *Aleph* (1956-66)  
Russel Tamblyn, *First Film* (1964-66); *Rio Reel* (1967-68)  
Curtis Harrington, *Wormwood Star* (1956)  
Lawrence Jordan, *Triptych in Four Parts* (1958); *Duo Concertantes* (1964); *Our Lady of the Sphere* (1969);  
*Cornell 1965* (1965-79)  
Bruce Conner, *A Movie* (1958); *Cosmic Ray* (1961);  
*Breakaway* (1966); *The White Rose* (1967)

Filmmakers Curtis Harrington and Russel Tamblyn will be present at the screening

Tickets available the day of the event; box office opens 2 hours prior to show time  
General \$9; Student/Senior \$7; AC Member \$6  
Street parking only

For more information, please visit [www.smmao.org](http://www.smmao.org) and  
[www.americancinematheque.com](http://www.americancinematheque.com), or call 323.466.FILM

Image:  
Wallace Berman  
Self portrait, Topanga Canyon  
1974 (printed in 2004)  
Posthumous Gelatin Silver Print  
16 x 20 inches  
Courtesy Wallace Berman Estate

**F R I D A Y**

▶ **October 21, 7:00 pm**

### *Beat Thing*

**David Meltzer** reads excerpts from his epic poem examining the multiple narratives of post-war American history, with musical accompaniment by Roberto Miranda and Crosscover  
Free Admission

**S U N D A Y**

▶ **November 6, 7:00 pm**

### *Walk Into My Voice: American Beat Poetry*

Presented by Spaceland Productions at Barnsdall Gallery Theater  
4800 Hollywood Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA

An evening of music and spoken word by **Harold Budd**, **Anna Domino**, and **Daniel Lentz**, inspired by the writings of Michael McClure, Philip Lamantia, Kenneth Patchen, Denise Levertov, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Diane Wakoski, and Jack Kerouac

Tickets available at [ticketweb.com](http://ticketweb.com); \$15 advanced purchase, \$17 day of show  
For more information, please visit [attheecho.com](http://attheecho.com) or call 323.662.7728

**F R I D A Y**

▶ **November 18, 7:00 pm**

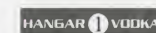
### *Booksigning and Reading*

**Tosh Berman**, founder of TamTam Books and co-editor of Boris Vian's *Manual of Saint-Germain-Des-Prés* (Rizzoli, 2005), compares American Beat culture with the artistic milieu of late 1940s Paris. Berman will present rare recordings and images of the Paris underground; **Paul Knobloch**, translator of the Vian *Manual*, will read excerpts  
Free Admission

Support for the exhibition and catalog *Semina Culture: Wallace Berman & His Circle* has been provided by Philip E. Aarons; LLWW Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts; the Pasadena Art Alliance; and Writers Boot Camp.



Special Thanks to:



### PROJECT ROOM

● **Exene Cervenka: America the Beautiful**  
**September 17–November 26, 2005**

### ● Opening Reception

**Friday, September 16, 7:00–9:00 pm**

**Thursday, November 3, 7:00 pm**

### *Exene Cervenka: In Performance*

Bergamot Cafe, Building A3

Free Admission



Exene Cervenka  
*Marle*  
2004  
mixed media collage  
22 x 18 inches



WALLACE BERMAN

PAGE 96

CALENDAR

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1978

# BERMAN: THE ADVERSARY ONE-MAN AESTHETE

BY TIM RUTTEN

*I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked, dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix, angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night*

Those opening lines of Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" declared war on the smug sensibility of America in the 1950s. Poet Robert Duncan uses them to introduce a comprehensive exhibit of work by Wallace Berman at the Otis Art Institute Gallery through Nov. 26.

Wallace Berman drew upon an adversary aesthetic ascribed to the "beat generation" and later inherited by the counterculture.

Though he is usually credited with launching the Assemblage movement, the West Coast's only truly indigenous contemporary art form, Berman, who was killed in a Topanga Canyon auto accident in 1976, has long been considered something of an enigma in the art world. Clearly, his concern was not the cool professionalism of mainstream art. His spirit was that of the true solitary, passionately engaged with life's deepest concerns, but beyond its fashions—"in the world, but not of it."

The 161 collages, photographs and three-dimensional pieces on exhibit at Otis are profoundly, often touchingly serious. The announcement of the only truly commercial show in which he participated during his lengthy career bore the inscription, "Art Is Love Is God."

Born in 1926, Berman left Fairfax High School at 17 and later studied briefly at the

Chouinard and Jepson art schools. Like many of the founding members of the beat generation, he was preoccupied with jazz, and his earliest known works, including one commercial album cover, are pencil drawings of jazz figures. In 1948, he began working in a furniture factory, acquiring the techniques—and some of the physical material—which were to form the basis of his early assemblage pieces.

In 1955, Berman began to work full-time as an artist, sharing a Los Angeles studio with Bob Alexander, under whose influence he purchased a small handpress. With it, Berman began to print and edit an anthology called "Semina," which he continued to publish until 1964. Its format was that of a small, unbound folio containing prose, poetry, collage and photographs, much of which was produced by the artist/printer. It was during this period that Berman also became acquainted with such other emerging Los Angeles artists as George Herms, Ed Kienholz, Craig Kauff-

man, John Altoon and Billy Al Bengston.

Like most of them, Berman elected to make his public debut at the pioneering Ferus Gallery. But while the Ferus provided many other artists with the scene of their initial triumph, Berman's 1957 show ended in what was for him a permanent trauma.

Someone registered an anonymous complaint about Berman's surrealist-tinged assemblages. Vice squad investigators seized upon a drawing from an early issue of Semina.

Berman spent two nights in jail and \$150 in fines over the now-legendary affair. When the judge asked Berman if he wanted to speak, the artist walked to the blackboard and wrote, "There is no justice, only revenge."

The Ferus show never reopened. Berman left for San Francisco where he published Duncan, David Meltzer, Michael McClure and Phillip Lamantia in Semina. A 1958 Look magazine story called Berman

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the North Beach Poet Maker."

In 1961 Berman marked his return to Los Angeles with a poem in Semina.

*Spurred by what reason*

*Do I leave this ark*

*For the 'city of degenerate*

*Angels' 500 miles south*

*other than to die.*

Yet in Southern California Berman embarked on the series which provides the bulk of the pieces in the Otis retrospective. These are the verifax collages, and they are among the most complex, subtle and demanding works ever produced by an American artist. Indeed, they may be said to bring to visual fruition some of the most radical aesthetic positions advanced by the beat generation writer-theorists.

The dominant image of the verifax series is that of a hand clutching a common transistor radio. In individual pieces, this image is reproduced serially with the radio's face replaced with smaller photographic images and Hebrew lettering especially the Aleph. Images visually echo William Burroughs' experimental writings in which conventionally composed prose pieces are cut apart and reassembled line by line.

Similarly, the selection of images reflects the common beat preoccupation with exposing the transcendent significance of the commonplace. They enforce perceptual intensity through dissonance.

Berman sought transcendence in the study of a traditional mystical discipline. He embraced the traditional Jewish mysticism of the Kabbalah, including contemplation of the visually compelling Hebrew alphabet. As David Meltzer points out in his own catalogue essay, "The 22 letters are 22 realms, 22 states of consciousness. Each container embodies an essence of existence. It is a four-dimensional alphabet. Each letter represents a literal self, a number, a symbol and an idea."

In Kabbalistic lore the Aleph represents the unifying presence that balances all other forces. It was Berman's touchstone.

The Spanish Kabbalist Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia taught a form of meditation in which, beginning with the contemplation of a single Hebrew letter written at random on a blank page, the student allows his mind to skip freely from one impression to another, while still more letters are inscribed autonomically on the page.

Berman's transistor radio becomes analogous to Abulafia's blank page and his apparently random images the fruit of a profoundly disciplined and informed contemplation. Taken together, they suggest a multidimensional, synergetic communication more akin to music than to spoken language. Both Berman and the Kabbalists were fond of that metaphor.

In the early 1970s, Berman began to work again in three dimensions, painting his Hebrew letters on rocks contained in sculptural pieces and out of doors on walls and boulders. The latter activity invites comparison with

still another of the beats' iconic figures, Han Shan, the Zen madman.

Han Shan went about the mountains of China inscribing his metaphysical poetry on rocks and the sides of buildings. The poems survived at all only because an earnest young T'ang Dynasty provincial prefect sent his men around the countryside to write them down. One seems written for Wallace Berman:

*A critic tried to put me down.*

*Your poems, he said,*

*Lack the basic truth of Tao.*

*But I remembered the old-timers*

*Who were poor and didn't care.*

*I had to laugh*

*Men like that should stick to making money. □*

*Rutten is an editor of The Times Opinion Section.*

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
MUSEUM OF ART



# Wallace Berman



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LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART



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Wallace Berman (b. 1926), a local artist living in Topanga Canyon, has been a seminal figure in the development of art on the West Coast. In 1949 Berman began to make sculptures from the scraps and reject materials he found lying around the factory where he worked finishing antique furniture. As he came into contact with other artists with similar interests, he began in his unobtrusive way, to exert an influence which helped to establish the California assemblage movement as a unique phenomenon in American art.

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Through the window from inside  
the cafe is in the street  
the trees are in the cafe  
the silver espresso trees  
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the outside of inside  
the soft yellow lights  
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Georgia on the jukebox  
at the corner of the  
Rue Delambre  
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and frames it and calls it  
America  
and gives it away

April 30 / June 2, 1968

# Los Angeles County Museum of

## Catalog of Works

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*Lent by Dennis Hopper, Los Angeles.*

2.

**Bouquet**, 1965, verifax collage, 28 x 29-5/16".

*Collection Los Angeles County Museum of Art.*

3.

**Proof**, 1965, verifax collage and various media, 10 x 11 1/2".

4/11.

**Silence Series**, 1965-68, verifax collage, 26 x 24".

*8 collages from a series in progress.*

12.

**Untitled**, 1965, verifax collage, 13 x 12".

13/19.

**Sound Series**, 1967-68, verifax collage and acrylic, 12 1/2 x 13 1/2".

*7 collages from a series in progress. Number 7 lent by Nicholas Wilde.*

20.

**Untitled**, 1967, verifax collage, 48 x 45 1/2".

*Lent by The Kleiner Foundation, Beverly Hills.*

21.

**Untitled**, 1967, verifax collage and acrylic, 14 x 18 1/2".

22.

**Untitled**, 1968, verifax collage and acrylic, 12 x 13".



# WALLACE BERMAN



*Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* 1964 mixed media 43 × 30¾ inches

# JESS



*Reentry Pattern (or Telepathic Conspiracy Between Tiamat and Fenris)*, 1985  
color paste-up 43¾ × 23 inches, collection Dr. and Mrs. Gerald Bush

ONE-MAN

BERMAN, W

a first exhibition of works by wallace berman june 7 thru july 4

**FERUS** gallery

736a la cienega  
los angeles 46  
Oldfield 2-7859

*art is love is god.  
W.B.*

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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

6-6-57



# Wallace Berman



Front Cover: Untitled, 10" x 6½" x 4¾"

Back Cover: *Posthumous Fragment*, 1976  
Verifax collage, 6" x 6½"

Fully illustrated catalogue available with an essay by  
Peter Boswell, Scholar-In-Residence at the Walker Art  
Center of Minneapolis.

# Wallace Berman

(1926-1976)

**Works from the Estate**

**January 9 - January 30, 1988**

**You are cordially invited to attend  
a reception for the family**

**Friday, January 8, 1988, 7-9pm**

**L.A. LOUVER**

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Validated parking available**





Photography: Thomas P. Vintz